Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Addendum

MIHP Number: B-4486

Property Name:

Connolly's Seafood Restaurant

Property Address:701-705 E. Pratt St., Baltimore, MD 21202

Based on a site visit conducted on December 14, 2005 by John Milner Associates, on behalf of Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA), this property is no longer extant.

Survey No. B-4486 Connolly's Seafood Restaurant Baltimore City

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:

Piedmont (Baltimore City)

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance (A.D. 1870-1930)

Modern Dominance (A.D. 1930-Present)

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Economic (Commercial and Industrial)

Social/Education/Cultural

Resource Type:

Category:

Building

Historic Environment:

Urban waterfront

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

Restaurant

Known Design Source:

None

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. B-4486

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state Maryland	county		and the state of
3. Classification		ozingaco gadhiya khuoqi	Hadron, is a bon
Category Ownership district public building(s) private structure both site	Status occupied work in progress tion Accessible yes: restricted dered yes: unrestricted	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation X other: vacant
4. Owner of Pro	operty (give names a	nd mailing addresses	of <u>all</u> owners)
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7. Description

Survey No. B-4486

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Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Connolly's Seafood Restaurant is a compound building comprised of three adjoining one-story gable-roofed structures along Pratt Street and a large, two-story warehouse section to the south. The restaurant, constructed in the early 20th century is located on Pier 5 in the Baltimore Inner Harbor. The Pratt Street (north) portion of the building is sheathed in metal siding; the walls of the warehouse are of corrugated metal. Signs advertising the restaurant are the building's only embellishment.

DESCRIPTION

Connolly's Seafood Restaurant, located at the northwest corner of Pier 5 in the Baltimore Inner Harbor, is a compound building comprised of adjoining structures facing Pratt Street (north) backed by a large warehouse to the south. The west facade of the restaurant is located on the water; surface parking now occupies the space to the south and east of the building. For purposes of this inventory form, the Pratt Street structures will be referred to as Buildings A, B, and C and the warehouse as Building D. The Pratt Street buildings are one story in height; the warehouse is two stories. Of the Pratt Street buildings, the building to the northeast (Building A), where entrances are located, is taller than the two buildings closer to the water on the west. Building C is located in the northwest corner; Building B, in the center, adjoins Building C and is connected to Building A by a recessed hyphen. All component structures display gable roofs with ridges running north-south. Connolly's waterfront setting, industrial appearance, and distinctive massing define its architectural character.

The exteriors of the steel-frame buildings are clad with metal siding. The east wall of Building A is corrugated metal. Horizontal aluminum siding is used on its north facade facing the street. Building B displays horizontal aluminum siding; Building C, corrugated metal. The warehouse is clad entirely with corrugated metal panels. The warehouse has a corrugated metal roof; the roofs of the three smaller structures are covered with asphalt shingles. Both the warehouse and Building C have skylights.

The entrance to the restaurant is located within a projecting storm porch at the center of the north (street) facade of Building A. A shallow eave extends across the street facade of Building A above the storm porch. Doors are also located on the east facade of Building A, at the west end of the north facades of Buildings B and C, and on the west (water) facade of the warehouse. There are loading bays on the east, south, and west (water) facades of the warehouse and at the center of the north facade of Building C. The storm porch on Building A is flanked by two plate glass windows. A 15-light window on the north facade of Building C has been painted over. There are five window openings on the west (water) facade of Building C. Because all but one of these openings have been boarded over, only one 4-over-4 light sash is visible. Various signs for Connolly's Seafood Restaurant decorate the building. Several of the signs depict crabs and oysters. "Pier 5" is centered at the top of the north gable of the warehouse.

The appearance and spatial configuration of the interior reflects the distinct exterior divisions and industrial character of the exterior of the building. While the interior walls of Building A are

support.

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check:	Applicable Criteria: X	ABCD	
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SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Connolly's Seafood Restaurant, probably constructed during the 1920s, is the last remaining example of structures devoted to early to mid-20th century commercial activity on the piers in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. Located on Pier 5, Connolly's Seafood Restaurant meets National Register Criterion A because it was associated with the Chesapeake-based commerce of the early 20th century. While commercial buildings north of Pratt Street still survive, Connolly's is the only remaining early 20th century commercial structure on the once bustling piers of the Inner Harbor. The Connolly's complex, which consisted of a restaurant (Building A), office (Building C), warehouse, oyster bar (Building B), and boats moored at the pier, has been operated by the same family for five generations. The restaurant was a Baltimore institution until it closed in 1991.

HISTORY

Baltimore developed out from the Inner Harbor, which provided the city with a relatively sheltered tidal harbor ideal for water-based commercial traffic of the late 18th and early 19th century. While the coming of the railroad diminished the relative importance of the port, the Inner Harbor was a teeming commercial area throughout the 19th and early 20th century. In February 1904 a disastrous fire destroyed much of downtown Baltimore including all but recent fireproof structures on the piers. Prior to the fire, the piers were privately owned. After the fire, the Burnt District Commission, which had authority to promulgate buildings codes and acquire land and easements for widening streets, recommended that the city acquire and operate the piers, leasing the land to tenants with long-term leases.

While the rebuilding of the Burnt District took place rapidly, reconstruction of the piers dragged on for five years. State laws prevented the Burnt District commission from issuing bonds prior to land acquisition. Families owning land on the piers were concerned that they might be refused leases on their former property, denying them the waterfront access crucial to their business. Consequently, many of the landowners on the piers contested the assessment of their land in the condemnation proceedings to delay the transfer of land to the City. Pier 5 was not completed until 1910.

Please see Continuation Sheets

10. G	eographical	Data			
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The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust

Shaw House 21 State Circle

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

(301) 269-2438

The City's plans for the Inner Harbor designated Piers 5 and 6 for local transshipment of goods. The piers were to be used for bulky materials like lumber. By the time the piers were finished, the Harbor Commission had begun to make long-term, large-scale plans for improving the Port of Baltimore. As the *Port Development Plan* of 1922 noted, "Piers 5 and 6 are not well adapted for oversea terminals on account of the expense of preparing for 30 ft. depth of water and could be best used for industries or coastwise shipping which does not require over 20 ft. of water and which does require city delivery." Piers 4, 5, and 6 were ideally suited for transferring food from Anne Arundel county and the Eastern Shore because of their proximity to Marsh Market, two blocks north. The Fallsway connected the piers with freight yards and passenger stations, providing a connection between water and rail transportation.

The Connolly's property was first leased to R.J. McAllister, a seafood dealer. Thomas Connolly, who had been a produce jobber on West Camden Street, came to work for McAllister in the 1920s. Connolly took over the business when McAlister died in the early 1930s. Opening a lunchroom in the "eastern half" of the building, Connolly operated both a retail seafood and produce business as well as a restaurant. He moored two boats, the Maggie C. and the William J. Brenner, Jr., at the head of the slip and sold oysters and produce from the boats. Long after seafood was trucked in rather than shipped, Tom Connolly continued selling fresh seafood from his boat and operating his seafood restaurant and oyster bar. This practice harked back to the days before refrigeration when customers could be assured of freshness only by purchasing at the source.⁴

The four components comprising Connolly's cannot be dated with any precision. Present in virtually all historic aerial photographs, the buildings were probably constructed in the mid-1920s. Connolly family oral tradition holds that Building A was constructed in 1904. The family possesses a piece of wood with the date 1904 carved in it. However, historic photographs show that structures on the piers burned to the ground. Pier 5 was not reconstructed until 1910 and Pratt Street was doubled in width shortly after the piers were completed. Even though pier construction on Pier 4 worked around existing structures, it is unlikely that there were structures on the site of Connolly's prior to the completion of the piers. The 1904 Sanborn Map shows two structures on the pier, the Old Bay Line Freight Shed, an iron clad building occupying the southern end of the pier, and a one-story wood shed at Pratt Sheet on the site of Connolly's. The shed is not located on the water and its configuration does not match any of the sections that comprise Connolly's. The map notes that Pier 5 is a lumber wharf. A 1908 plan of the piers, then under construction, shows the outline of the Baltimore Steam Packet Company warehouse at the southern end of the pier and a square drawn at the northwest corner of Pier 5. The Survey of the Port of Baltimore, published in 1920, describes the buildings on the pier at that time:

A portion of the pier at the outer end leased by the Baltimore Steam Packet Company is covered by a corrugated iron and wood shed, [of] irregular shape, averaging about

¹The Port Development Plan of Baltimore, Maryland, prepared in 1922, noted that Piers 5 and 6 were "operated by the city principally for the storage of lumber," p. 27.

²Ibid., p. 17.

³Harbor Board of Baltimore, Port of Baltimore: Modern Facilities and Terminal Advantages, p. 21.

⁴One small craft remains of oyster vending fleet," March 29, 1957 newspaper clipping in Connolly family collection.

255 feet by 65 feet plus 205 feet by 36 feet giving a gross area of 24,000 square feet. It is used for the storage and delivery of freight. Midway of the western side of the pier is a freight storage and delivery shed of frame construction, 70 feet by 75 feet, owned and occupied by the Baltimore and Carolina Steamship Company. Midway of the east side of a frame office 14 feet by 10 feet used by the Roberts Lumber Company. At the Pratt Street end of the pier are two frame buildings. One, 8 feet by 10 feet is used by the lumber Inspector of Baltimore City and the other frame shed 19.5 feet by 18.5 feet is used by M.C. McCallister, Commission Merchant. The Marine Transport Company also occupies a portion of the Pratt Street end of the pier, with a corrugated iron covered frame building 125 feet by 71 feet used as a freight storage and delivery depot.

The pier is operated by the City principally for the storage of lumber....⁵

The Marine Transport Company Building could comprise part of Connolly's where wood frame construction is visible beneath metal sheathing. The frame shed could survive within the portion of Connolly's denoted as Building A. An undated note on R.J. McAllister & Co. stationery in the Connolly family collection states, "Frank Kelly got R.J. McAllister to build oyster house on Pier 5 year 1924. The rental of ground for use of ground on Pier 5 on 703 E. Pratt St." The oyster house is probably incorporated within Connolly's.

The commercial network that formed the piers began to vanish by the mid-1950s. After the Bay Bridge opened, produce could be trucked in four hours in a trip that formerly took three days by boat.⁶ Marsh Market was closed in 1960 when produce dealers moved to the new market on the Pulaski Highway.⁷ The once bustling steamer traffic that conducted passengers to Philadelphia, Washington, Norfolk, and Annapolis vanished with the last run of the night boat, *City of Norfolk*, in 1962.⁸ Urban renewal came to the Inner Harbor in the 1970s. Nevertheless, Connolly's continued to thrive and to operate in traditional fashion. The mayor of Baltimore and other political figures were regular patrons.

In 1982 a restaurant reviewer captured the disparity between what Connolly's represented and what the Inner Harbor had become:

You can consider Connolly's a scruffy eyesore in the middle of the revolutionary vision of Baltimore's future the Inner Harbor development represents. Or you can consider Connolly's a piece of the real Baltimore, a place connected to the city's past, a restaurant with local character as opposed to the impersonal, tourist-oriented, chain seafood establishments that surround it. Or you can approach Connolly's the way I do: Hey, the kitchen can really turn out a great fried fish.

⁵Harbor Board of Baltimore, Survey of the Port of Baltimore, Volume 1, pp. 24-25.

^{6&}quot;One small craft remains of oyster vending fleet," March 29, 1957 newspaper clipping in Connolly family collection.

Merritt on cit.

^{8&}quot;Curtis Bay Memories: Night Boat," clipping in Connolly family collection.

⁹Elizabeth Large, "Connolly's was here before the chains came," Baltimore Sun,, November 5,, 1982.

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Connolly's closed in 1991. In an epitaph for the restaurant, James M. Merritt, who was in the wholesale produce commission business at Marsh Market from 1930 to 1960s, wrote that Tom Connolly's son Sterling continued the tradition of selling both produce and seafood, "and never allowed the premises to cease being a reminder of how things used to be on the waterfront."

^{10&}lt;sub>Merritt</sub>, op. cit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Connolly family collection.

"Curtis Bay Memories: Night Boat" page from book in Connolly family collection.

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- National Register Nomination for the Business and Government Historic District, Baltimore, Maryland. (Maryland Historical Trust)
- "Old seafood restaurant gets reprieve" in News American, March 1, 1979
- "On the Waterfront" in Baltimore City Paper, March 2, 1979, p. 27 (Enoch Pratt Free Library).
- "One Small Craft Remains of Oyster Vending Fleet," March 29, 1957, clipping from Connolly family collection.
- "An Order to Go: Closing of Connolly's stuns dedicated fans" in Baltimore Sun, August 29, 1991.
- Photograph entitled "Tom Connolly's Boats: The Maggie C. and Wm. Brenner (Connolly Family Collection)
- Port Development Commission. Port Development Plan of Baltimore, Maryland. Baltimore: A. Hoen, March 1922. (Enoch Pratt)

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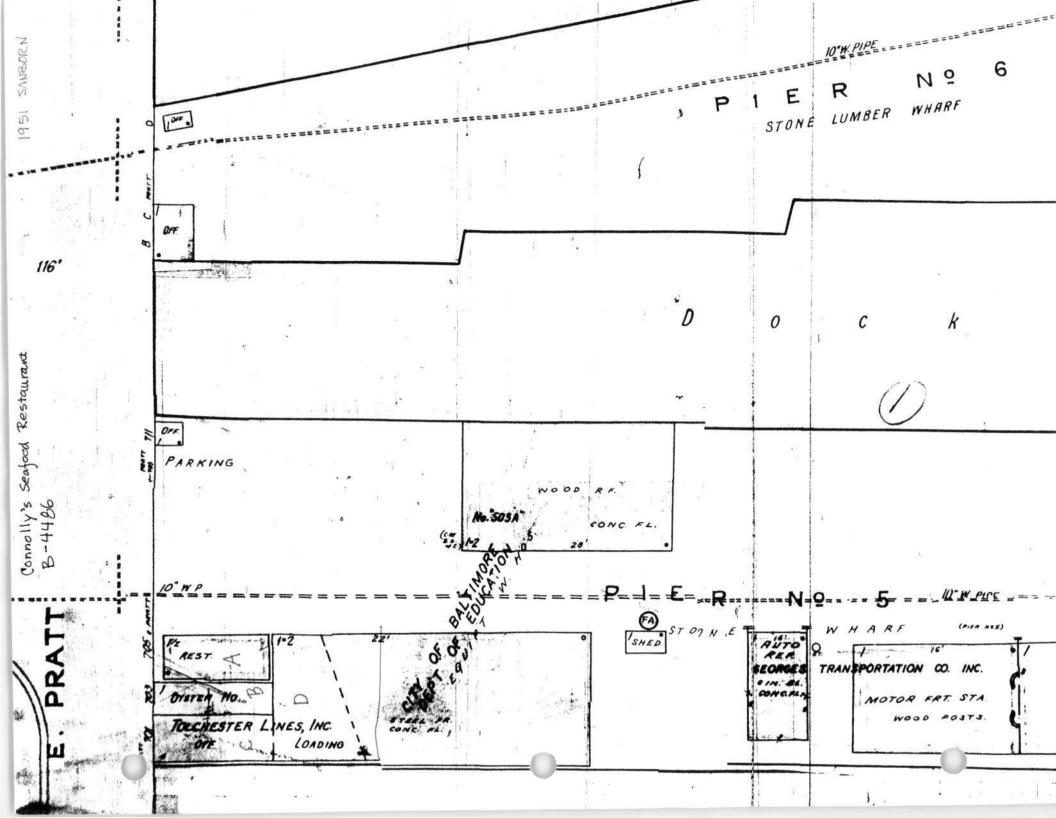
Query file, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

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Vertical file on restaurants, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Weeks, Barbara K. An Archival Investigation of the Archaeological Resources Associated With Harrison's at Piers 5 and 6, Baltimore, Maryland. Baltimore: Baltimore Center for Urban Archaeology, 1987.



B-4486 Connolly's Seafood Restaurant Baltimore City

LOCATIONAL MAP Source: USGS Baltimore East Quadrangle



B-4486 CONNOLLY'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND BETTY BIRD FEBRUARY 27, 1992 MD SHPO NORTH AND EAST FACADES - VIEW FROM NE



CONNOLLY'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

BETTY BIRD

FEBRUARY 27, 1992

MARYLAND SHOO

VIEW FROM NE SHOWING SIGNAGE

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B-4486 CONNOLLY'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT BALTIMORE CITY, MD BETTY BIRD FEBRUARY 27, 1992 MD SHPO SOUTH AND WEST FACADES - VIEW FROM SW 3 OF 11



B-4486 CONNOLLY'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT BALTIMORE CITY, MD BETTY BIRD FEBRUARY 27, 1992 MD SHPO INTERIOR: NW CORNER OF SECTION "A" 4 OF 11



B-4486 CONNOLLY'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT BALTIMORE CITY, MD BETTY BIRD FEBRUARY 27, 1992 MD SHPO INTERIOR: NORTH END OF SECTION "B" - VIEW FROM SOUTH 5 OF 11



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CONNOLLY'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

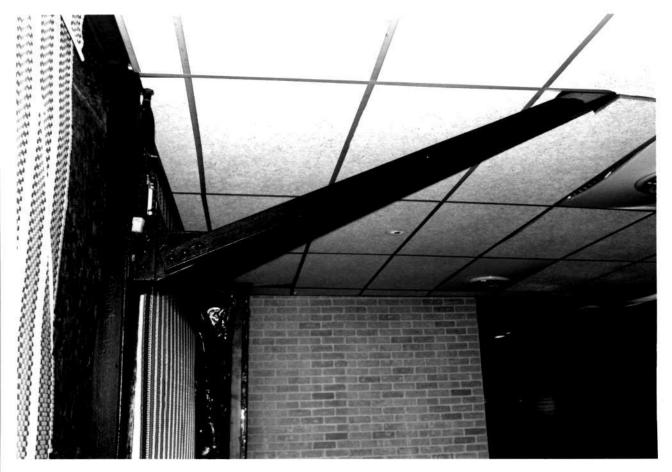
BALTIMORE CITY, MD

BETTY BIRD

FEBRUARY 27, 1992

MD SHPO
INTERIOR: NORTH END OF SECTION "C"- VIEW FROM SOUTH

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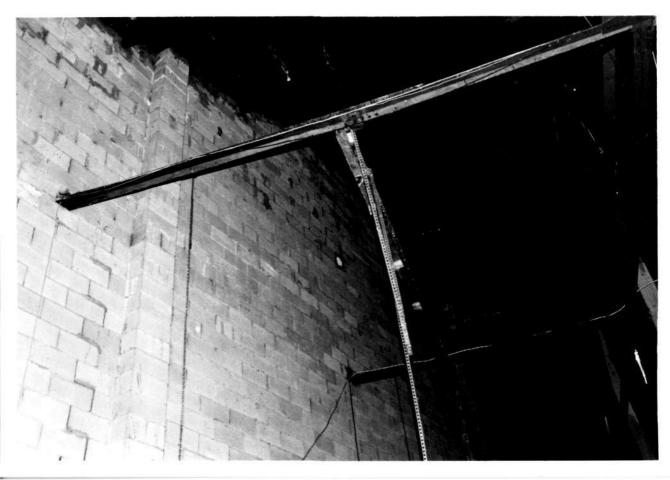
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7 OF 11



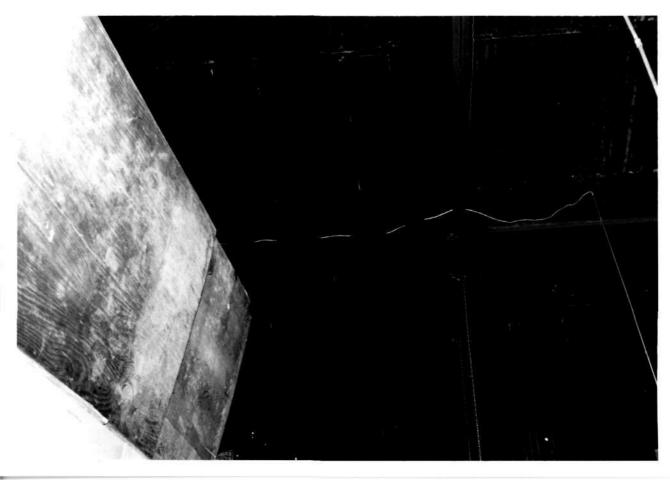
8-4486 CONNOLLY'S SFAFOOD RESTAURANT BALTIMORE CITY, MD BETTY BIRD FEBRUARY 27, 1992 MD SHPO INTERIOR: SOUTH END OF SECTION "C" - VIEW FROM NORTH 8 OF 11



B-4486 CONNOLLY'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT BALTIMORE CITY, ND BETTY BIRD FEBRUARY 27, 1992 MD SHPO INTERIOR: SOUTH WALL OF SECTION "D" SHOW IN G INTERSECTION OF SOUTH WALL (METAL) WITH CMU DIAGONAL INTERIOR PARTITION 9 OF 11



3-4486 CONNOLLY'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT BALTIMORE CITY, MD BEATTY BIRD FEBRUARY 27, 1992 MD SHPO INTERIOR: SECTION "D" - DETAIL OF STRUCTURE NEAR INTERSECTION OF METAL SOUTH WALL WITH CMU DIAGONAL PARTITION (SE CORNER)



8-4486 CONNOLLY'S STEAFOOD RESTAURANT BALTIMORE CITY, MD BETTY BIRD FEBRUARY 27, 1992 MD SHPO INTERIOR: SECTION "D" - DETAIL OF ROOF TRUSS 11 OF "